

God's Purpose For You

By

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Is there hope for today? Is society collapsing, as many tell us? Is the human species “just a ghastly biological blunder” as some evolutionists have declared? What is God trying to do? Why am I here and what am I to do about it?

The question is: Is there a purpose for life? If there is, wouldn't it be the greatest of follies to live out one's life only to miss the reason for it, and thus to have lived in vain?

It would be hard to conceive of a holy and just God who did things to no purpose. It would be harder to imagine that God has a purpose, but refuses to reveal what it is to His creatures.

The Bible speaks of God's “eternal purpose” (Eph. 3:11). Not only does He have a purpose, but He has expressly revealed it, as recorded from the beginning: “**Let us make man in our image, after our likeness**” (Gen. 1:26).

This, then, was the original purpose; that man should think, feel, and act like his Creator. He was created with the potential for character like that of God: righteous, wise, loving, merciful, and pure. As long as man reflected that image, as long as he thought God's thoughts and acted in harmony with God's design, he fulfilled the purpose of his being, and no problems existed. It was not until man chose to think and act in opposition to the Creator that he ceased to fulfill the purpose for his life, and on that day his troubles began (Gen. 1:26, 2:17, 3:3, 17-19).

Jesus, “who is the image of the invisible God” (Col. 1:15), gave a demonstration of one who fulfilled this purpose perfectly. This means more than the fact that Jesus is the literal Son of God. It means that He did everything according to God's desire. He could truthfully say, “I do always the things that are pleasing to Him” (John 8:29). This is what God expected of Adam, but when Adam was tempted, he abandoned the purpose of God in order to please himself. Jesus, who was “tempted in all points like as we are,” never once chose to follow some course that displeased God, and he received the Father's commendation: “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:17).

We all must admit to failure when it comes to truly reflecting the image of God. Jesus is the only one who succeeded perfectly. However, it is not the total completion of that purpose in this world that God requires of us, but rather that we embrace that purpose. This is what it means to “follow Jesus,” to seek to fulfill God's purpose just as Jesus did. Paul wrote, “Seek the things that are above where Christ is...” “Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus...” Jesus said, “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness...” (Col. 3:1, Phil. 2:5, Matt. 6:33). We won't be LIKE HIM until he comes again. “We know that if he shall be manifested we shall be like him; for we shall

see him even as he is” (1 John 3:2). This will be at his coming, the resurrection, and the glorification of all the saints. But notice that John further writes, “And every one that has this hope set on him purifies himself, even as he is pure” (Vs. 3). Since the believer’s hope is to be “like him” he makes it his daily purpose to attain that goal. A Christian must be one intentionally; that is, eh does not follow Christian principles just because it is part of his culture, nor because it is his church’s teaching, nor because it is what is expected of him. Being a Christian means purposing to learn of God in order to do His will. If there is a cultural change, as we are witnessing in our nation today, the Christian still is mainly concerned with pleasing God, and will measure all trends and concepts with the yardstick of God’s word.

There are some who may have advanced a long way toward reflecting God’s image, while many of us can see it only as a far distant goal, but **what we are concerned with is purpose, the fact that our *purpose* must be the same as God’s, that we should be like Him.**

This is what is meant by “repentance.” One who is pursuing his own goal, or, like Adam, following the tempter’s advice. When he hears of God’s purpose and sublime goal of being transformed to God’s own glorious image for eternity, he turns from the meaningless path of sin and starts in pursuit of God’s purpose. That’s repentance.

It gives meaning to baptism. The penalty for sin (pursuing the wrong purpose) is death. That penalty is met by Jesus who died for us. When we are baptized into Christ’s death we rise from the baptismal grave of water to live a new life, a life that follows God’s purpose (Rom. 6:3-11).

It provides motivation for prayer. We ask God to help us because we are trying to do what He wants us to do. It is useless to ask God to help us pursue a course that is the very opposite of the one He set for us, but what could be more important to Him than the accomplishment of His purpose? The heart of prayer is that His will be done in our lives.

Here is the reason for the assembly, the *ekklesia*, which we call church. We have a common purpose, and not only need one another’s help but have the desire to encourage and help each other in fulfilling that purpose. Unfortunately many churches have turned their assembly into a performer/spectator program rather than one in which members may interrelate with each other for mutual edification. God is glorified, not in great edifices built for comfort and convenience of His people, but in the way His people reflect His image in their daily intercourse with each other and with the world.

The express purpose of God stands directly in the way of the current religious movement which aims to blend all religions into one. It does not seek unity in Christ, but is a religion that excludes the binding commands of Christ. It is a creation of man without any revelation from God, nor access to Him. God’s purpose is not just ignored, but rejected by the denial of His word as the absolute and final purpose for mankind.

One may follow religious traditions and yet never come close to the purpose of God. Jesus was opposed because he continually broke the traditions which had been substituted for God's will (Mark 7:7-9). He warned: "because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you" (John 15:19). One has to decide whether he wants to satisfy God's purpose or man's, and when he rejects the revered idols of man he must be prepared to face man's bitter opposition.

What Jesus taught us is that worldly values and treasures are temporal and perishing. What tragedy for one to get to the end of life only to find that the great success or wealth attained had nothing to do with God's purpose; that all is wasted and there is no hope of eternal life. Why would the Creator give immortality to one who all through life showed that he loved the perishing things of the world more than he desired the life God offers? Therefore our hearts are to be set on that which is eternal and in harmony with the eternal purpose of God.

Not all can pursue the same occupation, but all CAN pursue the same purpose, that of growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus and being conformed to his likeness. It is the ONE thing that all CAN do, for there is nothing in the world that can stand in the way of it. You don't have to be wealthy, nor in perfect health, nor have a high IQ, nor live in any particular place, nor have any outstanding talent. Neither sickness, poverty, accident, opposition, persecution, nor anything else can keep you from choosing God's purpose and pursuing it all your life.

In contrast to the uncertainties of the world, which is passing away. God offers a certain future, when each child of His will be transformed into a perfect person in His image. "For it is God who works in you both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13). It is our privilege to humble ourselves before Him that He may work His purpose in us, which includes the resurrection to immortality and glorify in the last day.

"We know that to them that love God all things work together for good, even to them that are called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8.26).

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